

Heart of Brevard Artist Spotlight Series

Stop and Smell the Flowers with Stuart Howe: A Potter in the Heart of Brevard

By John Harris

“Practice, practice,” is the advice Stuart Howe, owner of Brevard Clay in the Heart of Brevard, offers to anyone who feels they don’t have the skills it takes to be artistic. “I hear so much, ‘I’m not creative, I can’t paint,’” he continued, “but you can’t speak German if you haven’t tried to speak it.”

Howe speaks from his own experience as he began his journey as a potter the summer before he started college at UNC Asheville. He was working as a lifeguard at a summer camp. He saw the pottery instructor creating with clay and thought, “that looks fun.” He gave it a try and was instantly hooked.



Howe was a political science major considering a career in law but wanted to continue working with clay. He spoke with a UNCA ceramics teacher, who was reluctant to let him into the class because he wasn’t an art major. “By the time I was graduating, I spent more time in the ceramics studio than anyone who got an art degree.... I had to force myself to not enter the studio for a couple weeks so I could finish my senior thesis,” Howe remembers.

Howe did pursue the art and worked at a local pottery studio. In order to develop more creative control, he opened his own studio. The Heart of Brevard was the obvious choice for the location. With the lack of pottery stores in the Heart of Brevard, Howe wanted to fill that spot serving locals and tourists alike.

When Howe isn't working in his studio, or spending time with his wife and infant son, he is working in his garden. Every morning Howe brings fresh cut flowers from his personal garden into his studio. He places them in the vases, appropriately adorned with hand painted flowers. The lucky customer who purchases a vase holding the flowers can take two of his passions home with them.



Howe's target audience, he simply puts, is "everyone who eats." Howe explained, "Mugs, bowls and plates are something everyone uses every day. You can just slip a little bit of art into their life even without them noticing." He continued, "The message that each piece represents is almost 'stop and smell the flowers' and the same as stop and enjoy your cup of coffee and stop and enjoy a bowl of pasta. The functionality of the work is the message of stop and make the everyday moments special."

While 2020 has presented its own challenges, Howe has used the extra time at home to spend it with his family, work in his garden and continue to improve his studio website. His studio is open for business, allowing you the opportunity to try your hand at painting your own pottery, take one of his own creations home with you, or both. If you would like to learn more about



Stuart Howe and Brevard Clay you can explore his site through this link:

<https://www.brevardclay.com>.

Stuart's full story as well as other local artists' spotlights will be showcased in the Heart of Brevard's e-Newsletter, social media and in an online gallery. The gallery includes each artist's interview, video and selected works. The gallery can be viewed here,

www.brevardnc.org/artistspotlight

The series is open to artists of all genres and mediums located within the Heart of Brevard. If you would like to be featured in this series, please reach to info@brevardnc.org to schedule your interview.

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Heart of Brevard 501(c)(3) is a North Carolina Main Street Community, designated by the NC Department of Commerce and Main Street & Rural Planning Center. Heart of Brevard is a recognized leading program among the national network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities who share both a commitment to creating high-quality places and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. All Main Street America™ Accredited programs meet a set of National Accreditation Standards of Performance as outlined by the National Main Street Center.

About the Author: John Harris is recent graduate of the UNC Hussman School of Journalism and Media is a nationally accredited professional undergraduate and graduate level journalism school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. John is currently serving as Heart of Brevard's intern.